

FORUM

kirtlandcc.forum@kirtland.af.mil, 846-4240

Is TRICARE waiver available?

I'm retired and I have been trying to get my children in to see a doctor for the last few days. It seems that the pediatric clinic is always booked.

Every time I get on the phone I am asked if I am retired or active duty, and I tell them I am retired and I am asked for a phone number where I can be reached usually within two hours or so I can be told that I am being authorized to go downtown.

I know that active duty personnel have priority over a retired person, but why are children paying the price? Children are neither active nor retired. They are children looking to get well.

My children are the most important things in my life. If the base hospital is always booked, I would rather take them to a medical facility that will see them that day.

I have heard in the past from TRICARE that I can write a request for a civilian medical attention waiver and submit it to the base hospital for approval, but I have asked the medical personnel at Kirtland AFB and no one seems to think this is true.

Is this a true statement or not?

I currently live in Bernalillo by Santa Ana Casino and my children attend day care out there. I know that if I was to live more than 50 miles away I could go see a doctor without approval, but since I only live 30 miles away, I always have to call the base first to see if my family or I can get in.

As you have seen in the media, our local community is experiencing a very active flu and cold season so all of our clinics are booking quickly.

As a TRICARE Prime beneficiary you may seek care with a network provider if the need is urgent and our medical team can't see you.

Our appointment clerks ask for military status so they may then use the appropriate term of address in the request we send to nursing staff. This has no bearing on our appointment availability, though, TRICARE Prime patients are in the highest priority category.

Based on the distance you live from Kirtland AFB, we have approved your request to obtain a civilian primary care manager.

Please contact the TriWest Service Center for assistance in choosing a civilian primary care manager. You can reach TriWest at



COL. HENRY L. ANDREWS, JR.
377th Air Base Wing commander

260-2960, Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-4 p.m., or 888-877-4111 during non-duty hours.

If you have questions call Senior Master Sgt. Geneva McConnell our patient advocate at 846-3406.

Who are firefighters, who are not?

I'm a little confused, and a lot upset.

I ran into one of your female firefighters at Kirtland AFB, and noticed the uniform she was wearing. I approached her and told her "thank you for all that you do for our protection and the sacrifices you've made."

I asked her what station she worked at and how long she'd been a firefighter. Her response was, "Oh no, I'm not a firefighter, I'm a secretary!"

I looked at her badge and it said firefighter, her T-shirt said firefighter, her jacket badge said firefighter. What am I missing here?

What would happen if I or somebody else needed firefighters help and saw her in uniform. I would expect them to be a firefighter, not a secretary.

I'm sure the police don't let their secretary's wear uniforms, do they? Please correct me if I'm wrong!

We have received several inquiries about Fire Department members who do not work in fire operations positions, but wear the same uniform as the firefighters, including fire inspectors, alarm room operators and administrative personnel.

All Fire Department members are authorized a uniform allowance and are required to wear prescribed uniforms.

Under the leadership of our new fire chief, we will accomplish a review of the Fire Department uniform standards during the first half of 2004. This review will include the addition of distinguishing features for each functional assignment within the department and a review of which members are required to wear uniforms.

Ski tickets gone after call

I am writing to bring attention to the inefficiency and inattention to detail of the Outdoor Recreation Department.

I called Outdoor Recreation Dec. 23 in the late afternoon and asked what kind of discount ski tickets they have on sale.

They said they have Santa Fe, Angle Fire and Taos tickets. Then after consulting with my family, we decided on Taos and made reservations for lodging this weekend.

This morning (Dec. 24) I went to Outdoor Recreation to purchase the Taos ski tickets. After a few minutes of looking, they didn't find any and then figured they must have sold out already. They also stated they would order some more—I guess to make me feel better.

I'm perplexed by a couple things: First that at the start of the ski season Outdoor Recreation has already run out of ski tickets; secondly, that Outdoor Recreation personnel were not even aware that they ran out of tickets until I showed up and tried to purchase some. Doesn't anyone keep inventory on ski tickets?

To me, keeping inventory of things like ski tickets would be a fundamental task in Outdoor Recreation during the ski season. Anyway, as a result I will have to purchase tickets at full price at Taos Mountain and that means I will spend \$44 more than I planned because of the inattention of the Outdoor Recreation personnel—and I'm not happy.

Thank you for contacting the Forum with your concerns. We apologize for the difficulties you experienced while trying to obtain

discount ski tickets at the Outdoor Recreation office.

When you called on Dec. 23 and spoke with the staff, they did have Taos ski tickets available for sale; however, by the end of that day, they were sold out.

It is difficult to predict how fast tickets will be sold on any given day. Since this was close to the Christmas season, many people and organizations purchased tickets to be used as door prizes for their holiday parties. Over 90 percent of our tickets were sold in a three and one half day period.

Similar to all stores or businesses, Outdoor Recreation has an inventory limit that is based on the amount of tickets that were sold the previous years. Since our demand this year surpassed what we sold in previous years, we found ourselves short. We are in the process of increasing our inventory limit on some of the most popular ski resorts, such as Taos.

We advise our customers to purchase the tickets before making additional plans, either by charging them over the phone with a credit card or by coming in to the Outdoor Recreation office right away. This will guarantee the tickets will not be sold to anyone else.

We will also let customers know when tickets are selling fast in order to prevent this from happening to another customer.

Forum

We want your suggestions and comments concerning Kirtland AFB.

However, may we also suggest giving base agencies or the chain of command the chance to resolve your concern before calling Forum.

If you decide the Forum is the right answer, we don't print callers' names.

Customer service

Chapel, 846-5691
CE Help Desk, 846-8222
Commissary, 846-9586
Computer help, 846-5926
Energy wasting, 846-4633
Exchange Service, 266-9887
Family Services, 846-0741
Finance, 846-8045, 846-6639
Law Enforcement, 846-7926
Legal Services, 846-4217
Medical Clinic, 846-3406
Services Squadron, 846-1828

Write: 377 ABW/CC Forum
2000 Wyoming SE
Kirtland AFB, NM 87117



**“Warrior Spirit-
Past, Present,
and Future”**

377th Air Base Wing Annual Awards
February 5, 2004 Social 6:00 p.m., Dinner 6:30 p.m.
Military: Mess Dress / Semi Formal
Civilian: Coat and Tie
POC: Unit First Sergeant

Developing Airmen to meet changing missions

The overall goal of Air Force force development is to successfully accomplish the full spectrum of changing Air Force missions by developing Airmen with the required skills, knowledge and experience to lead and execute current and future mission capabilities, stated “Aim Points,” published by the Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs Office.

The following objectives will help the Air Force attain this goal:

- ★ Deliberately connect all training and educational opportunities to assignment experiences to best build competencies that meet Air Force need in and across career fields
- ★ Purposefully connect individuals’ goals to Air Force needs to best achieve both
- ★ Ensure Air Force personnel-directed decision processes invest the right education, training and experience in the right people at the right time while meeting Air Force requirements

★ Better use all the strengths of officer, enlisted, civilian, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve people

★ Enhance the understanding of all Airmen and their roles in development, using their inputs in the assignment process and providing feedback to inform and shape expectations

Senior leaders are saying...

The Air Force Senior Leadership Management Office released this force development statement in Oct. 2003: “The current system must change to cultivate Airmen. Nothing is broken; there is no single great problem that must be solved.

“We develop great Airmen now. However, because we have such a smaller force today, which is experiencing a very high operational tempo while absorbing a high technological-growth rate, we must better use the time and effort of our people.”



Elaine Espinoza-Mitchell

Security specialist retires after varied 32-year career

With Army and federal service careers spanning 32 years under her belt, Elaine Espinoza-Mitchell retires to civilian life after a ceremony today.

Her years of service to America include Army tours to Georgia, two tours in the Republic of South Korea, West Germany, Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

Mrs. Espinoza-Mitchell was “the first woman to be awarded the Schutzenschnur” by the German government for her sharp-shooting. And, except for jumping from an aircraft, she met all of the requirements to become an Airborne Ranger.

After a medical discharge because of injuries sustained while on active duty, she entered federal service as a training manager at the Women’s Nurse Corp Professional Development Branch, Washington.

Her federal assignments have also included the 88th Logistics Branch at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, the Defense Institute Security Assistant Management and Kirtland AFB. At this installation she has worked at the Contract Management Division, Phillips Laboratory twice and the Air Force Research Laboratory. Her career also took her to work in the International Programs and to the Joint U.S. Military Mission for Aid to Turkey.

For the past seven years, Mrs. Espinoza-Mitchell served as a personnel security specialist with the 377th Security Forces Squadron.

She was recognized as the Civilian of the Year for the 377th Security Forces Squadron, the 377th Support Group and the 377th Air Base Wing in 1999 and 2000. She was Kirtland AFB Civilian of the Year in 1999.

In 1999 and 2002, Mrs. Espinoza-Mitchell was recognized by the AFMC Inspector General as an Outstanding Performer.

She also is a life member of the Disabled American Veterans and is on the DAV Honor Guard.

Mrs. Espinoza-Mitchell and her husband, retired Air Force Maj. Edward C. Mitchell, have one son, Edward II.